DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 762 SO 025 636

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TITLE Who's Number One? Study Guide. Episode #807. America's Defense Monitor, Educational TV for the Classroom.
INSTITUTION Center for Defense Information, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Oct 94
NOTE 9p.; This brochure accompanies a VHS videotape of the same title (not available from EDRS). For other study guides in this series, see SO 025 635-642.
AVAILABLE FROM Center for Defense Information, 1500 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20005 ($25 per VHS copy; educational discounts available).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Development; *Developed Nations; *Developing Nations; Higher Education; *International Relations; *Living Standards; Military Training; *Quality of Life; Secondary Education; Social Problems; Social Studies; Social Values; *Values; World Affairs; World Problems

ABSTRACT

This program examines the relationships between domestic investment in society and the continuing pressures to maintain a strong military. The U.S. military virtually is unchallenged in the world, but basic "quality of life" issues remain to be addressed at home in the United States. This program provides facts and contrasts between the United States and its allies in military strength and domestic problems. The study guide offers questions to use before viewing the video, questions to follow the video, classroom activities to focus student thinking on the problem, topics for further research, and a list of 10 resources. (EH)

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AMERICA'S DEFENSE MONITOR

ED 390 762

Educational TV for the Classroom

STUDY GUIDE FOR

Who's Number One?

EPISODE # 807

SO 025 636

Produced by the Center for Defense Information

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Who's Number One?

United States military might is unchallenged; our allies' military forces are among the world's most powerful, yet not in the same league as the United States. Potential adversaries such as Iraq and North Korea have very limited military capabilities compared with the U.S. The United States feels it must continue to keep military spending at Cold War levels in order to maintain its military predominance.

Yet in many "quality of life" measures such as health, crime, education, poverty, and financial debt, the U.S. lags behind many of its industrial allies. Huge and continuing federal government budget deficits threaten to cripple industrial investment and the nation's economic productivity in the future. Our allies enjoyed U.S. military protection during the decades of the Cold War, and used that guarantee to put more of their resources into civilian industry and social programs.

This program examines the relationships between domestic investment in our society and the continuing pressures to maintain a strong military. Will more government funding to address domestic problems provide solutions to our growing social ailments? Can lower military spending reduce our destructive budget deficits? "Who's Number One" provides interesting facts and contrasts between the U.S. and its allies in military strength and domestic problems.

THIS PROGRAM FEATURES:

ROBERT BOROSAGE	Campaign for New Priorities
SUSAN ECKERLY	The Heritage Foundation
JAMES FALLOWS	Author, Looking at the Sun
DR. FRED IKLE	Center for Strategic and International Studies

BEFORE VIEWING QUESTIONS

1) How large are the relative roles military, political and economic stability play in defining a nation's stature on the global scale? Are these roles viewed the same in the post-Cold War world as they were during the Cold War?

2) Is there a tradeoff between military spending levels and a nation's ability to meet domestic needs and balance its budget?

3) What are some of the domestic problems you feel are in need of the most attention in the years to come?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1) Does this video present a certain point of view on the issues that it addresses? What viewpoints are represented by those interviewed in the video?

2) Using the video's analysis of post Cold War threats to the U.S., do you think we can divert funding from the defense budget to other domestic programs and to lowering our budget deficits?

3) Will the U.S. weaken its standing as the only military superpower by making spending on education, crime, health care, and industry new priorities?

4) Our national debt will reach $4.5 trillion in 1994 even with defense spending reductions. Do you think the U.S. can afford to shift funds to domestic spending? Is giving the federal budget more spending power the best way to address social and economic problems?

5) The video provided examples from Germany, France and Japan of programs provided exclusively by government funding. Can similar efforts to build social programs administered by the government work here in the U.S.? How does current discourse on universal health care shed light on Americans' acceptance of government driven social reforms?

6) If the U.S. decides to cut back defense spending in order to reduce deficit spending or to focus on domestic issues, what parts of the military budget could be targeted for reductions (e.g. overseas troop deployments, nuclear submarine procurement, fighter aircraft upgrades, etc.)?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Experts in the video expressed the opinion that U.S. improvement in domestic indicators, such as infant mortality rate, average life span, percent of the population with health care, and national student test scores, will better indicate U.S. strength than the overall amount of defense spending. Others felt that the U.S. must remain a global military force in order to insure its power. Divide the classroom up into two groups. The first group must take the position that military power is the most important factor in determining a nation's strength. Have them develop a list of current events that illustrates the predominance of military power in international affairs. The second group must take the position that political stability and economic growth factors are the most important. Have this group also draw on current world events to demonstrate their position. Then have both groups defend their positions, and discuss the implications of these positions on federal spending priorities.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Choose an ally of the United States during the Cold War and a successful domestic program within that country (e.g. high-speed trains in Japan, universal health care in Germany, etc.). How did government funding make that program possible? What problems has it caused? What priorities were bypassed to make it work? What resources were mobilized to support it? Examine the domestic realities that made widespread acceptance of that program possible.

Then examine a similar issue in the U.S. What role has the federal government played in resolving the problem? Have federal government policies made a difference? Has there been resistance to federal involvement, or calls for more spending? Develop a federal budget proposal that prioritizes funding areas in need of more resources to fight this particular domestic problem.

RESOURCES

"1995 Military Spending: The Real Story." Defense Monitor Vol. XXIII, No. 5. Center for Defense Information, Washington, DC (202) 862-0700.

Fallows, James. Looking at the Sun. Pantheon Books. New York, 1994. 517 pages.

OECD in Figures: Statistics on the Member Countries. 1994 Edition. Free through the OECD Information Center, Washington, DC (202) 785-6323.

Sivard, Ruth. World Military and Social Expenditures 1993. 56 pages. World Priorities. Washington, DC (202) 965-1661.

United Nations Development Programs. Human Development Report 1994. Oxford University Press. 1994. 227 pages.

Wolff, Michael et al. Where We Stand: Can America Make It in the Global Race for Wealth, Health, and Happiness? Bantam, 1992. 347 pages.

Organizations:

Campaign for New Priorities
424 C Street NE, Washington, DC (202) 544-8222

Center for Strategic and International Studies
1800 K Street NW, Washington, DC (202) 887-0200

The Heritage Foundation
214 Mass. Ave. NE, Washington, DC (202) 546-4400

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America's Defense Monitor offers an in-depth look at our nation's military and security related policies. Each thirty minute program is a visually stimulating and entertaining resource for the high school or college classroom. Episodes can be used to supplement regular classroom material or to introduce new topics. By bringing topics to life through the medium of video, this award-winning series can help arouse student interest in crucial issues.

Topics range from the social costs of military spending to nuclear proliferation, the arms trade, and the impact of the military on society, the media and the environment. Each program features interviews with important policy makers.

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